DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 548 FL 020 336

AUTHOR Koike, Shohei
TITLE Developing Instructional Materials for Business Japanese.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (10th, Ypsilanti, MI, April 3-5, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Standards; Business Administration Education; *Business Communication; Course Descriptions; Course Organization; *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; Curriculum Development; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials; *Japanese; *Material Development; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Eastern Michigan University

ABSTRACT

Business Japanese should be the study of Japanese language and culture for business communication and should include values and beliefs and institutional constraints on which the Japanese act as well as business etiquette and terminology. Topics to be covered in instruction will vary depending on the role (seller, buyer, or colleague) played by the individual in either the Japanese or the American market. Each role in each market requires familiarity with different relationships, practices, language use, language choice, and cultural knowledge. Lack of instructional materials in Business Japanese makes development of materials necessary. However, even after appropriate topics are chosen, attention must be given to fitting objectives and expectations to the realities of student capabilities and needs, institutional constraints, and program characteristics and goals. While Japanese language proficiency is secondary to other professional qualifications of students, student marketability will be greatly enhanced by the addition of Japanese language competence. Here again, course content should be geared to practical role needs. Audiovisual and print instructional materials developed for three business Japanese courses at Eastern Michigan University illustrate how materials can focus on specific role requirements. Some other appropriate materials are available in the literature on Japanese business. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED345548

DEVELOPING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR BUSINESS JAPANESE

by

Shohei Koike

Eastern Michigan University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Geoffrey Vaught

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Paper

To be presented at the 10th Annual Conference

on Language and Communication for World Business

and the Professions

April 1991

FL 020 336

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Although it is widely acknowledged that there is a strong demand for a Japanese class on business communication, little has been discussed on what Business Japanese is or how different it should be from other "regular" Japanese courses. Moreover, there is a question as to what topics should be covered and how business culture should be incorporated into Japanese language classes. The objectives of this paper are to discuss the significance of integrating the component of Japanese business culture with language instruction, to identify essential areas of topics to cover and to make suggestions on developing instructional materials for Business Japanese.

Cultural Competency in Business Japanese

Lately, many Japanese programs at U.S universities have shifted their focus from Japanese literature to the acquisition of language skills--at least at beginning- and intermediate- level Japanese courses. In this process, much attention has been directed towards teaching methods to improve linguistic competency in Japanese language. However, preoccupation with improving linguistic competency has often created Japanese programs which fail to appreciate the dictum that achieving a level of oral proficiency in Japanese may do more harm than good if it is not accompanied by an equivalent level of competency in Japanese culture. As learners' oral proficiency levels increase, they are expected by the Japanese to have corresponding competency in Japanese culture--as both

something to perform and something to know about--and to behave accordingly. This is especailly true when working or dealing with Japanese business people. A foreign business person who speaks Japanese is more likely to annoy or even offend the Japanese than the one who does not speak Japanese if both show poor competency or performance in Japanese business culture. The kind of people who are most likely to offend the Japanese will be native speakers of Japanese who are not competent in performing Japanese culture because they have lived abroad long enough to miss critical socialization in Japan.

If we want learners to effectively communicate, work and deal with the Japanese, we cannot place too much emphasis on the significance of developing competency in Japanese business culture. Business Japanese should be the study of Japanese language *and culture* for business communication. Business Japanese as such should be different from other Japanese language studies in that learning about and performing Japanese business culture is an integral part of the study. Instruction on Japanese business culture is the necessary (but not sufficient) component of Business Japanese. The development of cummunicative competency in Business Japanese requires far more than a study of business-related vocabulary and terminology. Cultural competency in Business Japanese requires more than knowledge of Japanese business etiquette on bowing and exchanging business cards. In order to understand why Japanese business people think and behave differently from

American counterparts, one should know values and beliefs the Japanese act on as well as institutional and other constraints under which they have to act.

Japanese business culture is a necessary component of Business Japanese. Japanese should be learned in cultural context. At the same time, the business culture should be discovered in the language itself and in the interaction of the language users. The above criteria are, of course, based on the assumption that our goal is to improve understanding of and communication with Japanese business people. If we use these cirteria as a guideline to examine or to develop instructional materials for Business Japanese, we may shed light on at least what sort of topics and lessons are *not* relevant. Why should we include, for example, a lesson on taking a cab if we don't incorporate the concept of *sekiji* or seating order into the discourse? How relevant is a lesson on dining at a restaurant if the discourse is not integrated with such concepts as building up *ningen kankei* (interpersonal relations) through socializing and inappropriateness of engaging in detailed business discussion at a dinner table?

Topics for Business Japanese

The criteria described above may help us to tell what kind of topics are *not* relevant to Business Japanese, but they are not instrumental in identifying what topics should be included in Business Japanese.

U.S. business people communicate with their Japanese counterparts as (r1) sellers, (r2) buyers or (r3) colleagues/ co-workers when doing business or working with the Japanese either in (m1) the Japanese market or (m2) the U.S. market. Figure 1 represents a 2 by 3 matrix of roles that U.S. business people play and the markets where they do business or work with the Japanese. Cell (A) and (B) represent cases

Figure 1. Americans Communicating with the Japanese

	Roles to Play		
	Sellers	Buyers	Colleagues
Japanese Market	(A)	(B)	(C)
U.S. Market	(D)	(E)	(F)

where Americans do business, as sellers and/or buyers, in the Japanese market (excluding cases where they only export their products to Japan). These cases require familiarity with, among other things, characteristics of the Japanese market, Japanese business customs and practices as well as differences in negotiation styles and decision making processes between the U.S. and Japan. Cell (C) represents cases where Americans work with their Japanese colleagues or co-workers or the Japanese company or the U.S.-owned company in Japan. These cases need familiarity with the system of Japanese

organization and personnel relations, human resource practices, and interpersonal relations among subordinates, colleagues and superiors. Cell (D) represents cases where Americans sell goods and services to Japanese businesses and consumers in the U.S. market, where the Japanese direct investment has shown a remarkable growth. Even though business with the Japanese is conducted primarily in English, communication with the Japanese clients will be greatly improved if American business people are competent in Japanese language and business culture. This is because not all Japanese in the U.S. market speak English and because status-conscious Japanese buyers often bring with them Japanese cultural values--such as the one that buyers outrank sellers--even when they buy goods and services in the U.S. market. Cell (E) represents cases where the Japanese are sellers in the U.S. market. These cases are least important in terms of developing instructional materials for business Japanese. Cell (F) represents cases where Americans work with Japanese colleagues and co-workers for Japanese companies in the U.S. Japanese companies in the U.S. have not been very successful in utilizing effectively the local managerial talents and in motivating American white-collar workers. It would be a great asset to Japanese-owned firms in the U.S. to have Japanese-speaking Amierican managers who are familiar with differences in human resource practices between the two cultures.

Cases represented by (A) and (B) constitute an area of topics that may be labeled as "Doing Business in Japan."

Cases represented by (C) and (F) constitute an area of topics that may be labeled as "Working with the Japanese." Cases represented by (D) constitute an area of topics that may be labeled as "Dealing with Japanese clients in the U.S." The development of instructional materials needs a different focus depending on which area of business situations or enviroments will be studied. Instructional materials with a focus on " Doing Business in Japan" would be quite different in many respects from those with a focus on "Working with the Japanese." For example, instructional materials designed for the American seller doing business in Japan would place emphasis on the Japanese market, business customs, negotiation with the Japanese, while those materials designed for Americans working for Japanese-owned companies in the U.S. would focus more on differences in human resource practices.

Developing Instructional Materials

A lack of instructional materials for Business Japanese in the market gives us little choice but to develop our own. Even after we have chosen the area of topics we want to focus on, we still have to take into account the capabilities and needs of our students as well as institutional constraints such as the availability of financial and human resources, and the characteristics and goals of Japanese programs. We must question, for example, if it is realistic to expect students of a undergraduate program to be able to read and write business letters in four years. Or can we expect students to

be able to conduct a formal negotiation all in Japanese upon completion of the program? Another important factor is the marketability of our graduates or what sort of qualifications businesses are looking for. In the following, I will describe how I have considered these factors in developing instructional materials for business Japanese courses at Eastern Michigan University.

I have developed three Business Japanese courses--JPN 361 Japanese for International Trade, JPN 446 Business Japanese I and Business Japanese II--for the Language and International Trade (LIT) program, and the Language and World Business (LWB) program. In addition to 4-year Japanese study, LIT students are required to minor in one area of business and LWB students are required to major in Business Administration.

It is my belief that students' competence in Japanese language is *secondary* in terms of their marketability, unless they have native or near-native proficiency in speaking, reading and writing. However, their marketability will be greatly enhanced if their competency in Japanese language and culture is added to their strength in such areas as business, law, computer science, engineering, technology, TESOL, teacher training (K-12) and so on. Given the limited contact hours of the undergraduate Japanese program, it is quite unrealistic to expect students to achieve near-native proficiency even in speaking Japanese, not to mention reading and writing it. Considering the contact hours and study time available to the average EMU student, I believe it would be a wrong strategy to

emphasize learning four skills equally at the same time. If our goal is to prepare students with technical backgrounds to be able to read technical articles and documents, it might be appropriate to develop a program which solely emphasizes reading skill even at the expense of other skills. One of the primary goals of Japanese programs at EMU is to prepare students to be able to understand and communicate orally with Japanese business people primarily on uncomplicated, non-techinical subjects.

For the three Business Japanese courses at EMU, I have selected two major areas of business situations or environments, that is, "Doing Business in Japan," and "Working with the Japanese." JNP 361 Japanese for International Trade and JPN 447 Business Japanese II cover topics or situations relevant to "Doing Business in Japan," and JPN 446 Business Japanese I covers topics or situations relevant to "Working with the Japanese." JPN 361 focuses on differences in negotiation styles and in decision making processes between the U.S. and Japan, while JPN 446 focuses on business customs and practices and the characteristics of the Japanese market.

For JPN 361, I have developed a Japanese text which is integrated with *Taking Your Product into the Japanese Market,* a six-volume video narrated in English. The story of the video revolves around an American sales manager who visits Japan for the first time in an attempt to sell his company's precision equipment. By observing a series of mistakes he makes, students will learn sources of conflict and

misunderstanding in doing business and negotiating with the Japanese. The video is narrated and dubbed in English because it was developed primarily for American business people who do not speak Japanese. The Japanese text I developed provides a summary of each scene and explains important points to remember. The lesson on each scene includes a list of names and titles of major players, a brief summary of the scene, and points to remember, followed by vocabulary and sentence examples. Questions for review are included at the end of each chapter. After watching the video, students will learn how to describe the scene and to explain important points in Japanese. This Japanese text, along with a collection of articles written in English, emphasizes cultural competency . The topics for the business culture integrated in the Japanese text include: a) Japanese business etiquette, b)using contacts and connections, c) using a proper channel of communication, d) role of middle management, e) decision making process, f) goals and styles of negotiations, g) status and bargaining power, h) socializing and entertaining, i) impasse and conflict, and j) contract. What we need now is the Japanese language video and the Japanese text that emphasize performance in lerning how to conduct business and negotiation with the Japanese. We need, for example, an intermediate or advanced version of East-West Institute's *Contemporay Business Japanese*, with a more specific focus on the busines culture. We need more materials based on real or realistic cases, as presented for example in *Nichibei*

Bijinesu "Nego" no Hon'ne, where socurces of conflict and misunderstanding are to be discovered in the discussion between American and Japanese negotiators.

For JPN 447, I have written *Competing in the Japanese Market,* disseminated as a coursepack, which covers such topics as the characteristics of the Japanese market, commercial customs, intercorporate relations, distribution system, retailing and wholesaling, and sales promotion. This Japanese text takes the format of a discussion between an American student and a Japanese professor who is knowledgeable about the performance of foreign affiliates doing business in Japan. The text first presents a discussion of the general characteristics of the Japanese comsumer market and the distribution system, followed by three chapers each of which discusses successes and/or failures a foreign affiliate has experienced in the Japanese market. Three companies that were chosen as cases are Kentucky Fried Chicken, BMW and Proctor & Gamble (more cases will be added in the near future). Students are expected to consider, through the discussion of case studies, what has brought about successes and failures in terms of marketing strategy, corporate philosophy, flexibility in making adjustment and commitment to the Japanesae market. The text must be constantly updated because things change rapidly in the fiercely competitive Japanese consumer market. It must also be expanded to include not only more cases in the consumer market, but also cases in other markets such as its capital goods market and financial market.

JPN 446 Business Japanese focuses on oral communication inside the *kaisha* (the Japanese corporation) and the system of organization and personnel relations, including topics such as job interview, employment, promotion, decision making and interpersonal relationship. For JPN 446 I have written *Shokuba de no Nihongo Kaiwa* (Japanese conversation at the office) disseminated as a coursepack. The Japanese text begins with a lesson on job application and interview, followed by Ch. 2 *Kihonteki Manaa Kotoba Zukai* (manners & language), Ch. 3 *Denwa o Ukeru* (answering phone), Ch. 4 *Dengon Memo* (message & note), Ch. 5 *Apointomento* (appointment), Ch. 6 *Hoomon* (visit), Ch. 7 *Hoo Ren Soo* (reporting, contacting & consulting), and Ch. 8 *Tsukiai* (socializing).

There are many books on business manners and etiquette written for the Japanese who are to enter the job market in Japan. There are also a couple of publications designed for foreign nationals who want to work for Japanese companies--*Nihongo de Bijinesu Kaiwa* and *Nihon de Bijinesu.* The former, developed for English-speaking nationals, includes English translation of the text and the vocabulary list. The latter has neither an English explanation nor a vocabulary list, but situations and Japanese expressions used in the text seem more realistic and practical. *Nihon de Bijinesu* also provides cross-cultural perspectives, presenting situations where misunderstanding and miscommunication often take place between Japanese and foreign employees.

Misunderstanding and miscommunication often take place

among personnel working for Japanese-owned companies in the U.S. For example, American personnel often become frustrated when discussion on important issues is conducted only in Japanese. They are often not sure of what exactly their authority is and how their performance is evaluated because they are given neither detailed job description nor adequate feedback from Japanese managers and executives. Since many of our graduates at EMU will seek employment in the U.S., this seems an area which urgently needs instructional materials that focus on differences in human resource practices, emphasizing the development of cross-cultural awareness among American and Japanese personnel. There is a growing number of literature dealing with this issue. To name a few books recently published: *Management Culture and the Effectiveness of Local Executives in Japanese-owned U.S. Corporations, Kokusai Jidai no Keiei Jootatsuhoo,* and *111 no Toraburu: Beikoku Genba no Komatta Nihonjin. 111 no Taraburu* will be of great use in developing instructional materials. It is a collection of cases based on real situations the authors encountered or stories they heard as interpreters working for Japanese companies in the U.S.

In this paper, I have argued that Japanese business culture is a necessary component of Business Japanese and I have identified major areas of topics or business situations on which instructional materials for Business Japanese will be developed. Even though there is a lack of instructional materials for Business Japanese ready to use in class, a large

amount of literature on Japanese business is available. What we can do is to study the business literature and incorporate it into Business Japanese so that the language can be learned in the cultural context and the culture can be discovered in the language.